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FAX

23 August 1994

TO: State AF/C - Kevin Aiston
FAX: 202 - 647 - 1726

FROM: Embassy/Kigali
FAX: 873 - 150 - 7504

Drafted: CDA-JELeader
Cleared: CDA-JELeader

SUBJECT: Draft Cable - Prime Minister Replies to
Acting Secretary's Letter

1. Summary. Prime Minister Twagiramungu stressed to Charge that he is not/not against the French in reacting to the Acting Secretary's letter encouraging extension of French in southwest Rwanda. His position indicated some backpeddling from his earlier adamant stand against an extension. A French representative has arrived in Kigali and appears to be getting a hearing from GOR leaders. end summary.
2. Prime Minister Faustin Twagiramungu summoned Charge Leader to his office Sunday morning, August 21, for an 8:30 meeting (the 07:15 messenger actually requested 07:30!). The Foreign Minister participated for the first few minutes in which the two of them responded to the Acting Secretary's letter urging extension of the French presence in the Humanitarian Protection Zone (HPZ) of southwest Rwanda.
3. The Prime Minister stressed that he had nothing against the French. He reacted strongly against the letter's implication that any mass exodus of refugees would be attributed to the GOR's "unwillingness to allow the French to stay long enough to effect a smooth transition." He said the government had received no formal request for prolonging the French mission from either the UN or the French.
4. Furthermore, he said, there had been notable evolution in the situation in the southwest august 18-19. The troops of UNAMIR (Ethiopians) had arrived and been deployed. The new UNAMIR commander, Major General Tousignant, had visited the area and made a positive evaluation. French Foreign Minister, Alan Juppe, had made a positive declaration about the handover to UNAMIR. The Prime Minister said that having the French stay would create a "useless misunderstanding."

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5. Comment. The Prime Minister wanted to leave no doubt that he intends to develop a working relationship with the French despite his opposition to their extension in the HPZ. This message is consistent with that of both the President and the Prime Minister. Both told Charge that the government intends to work with the French just as it collaborates with other governments.

6. Comment continued. A French representative arrived in Kigali August 18 as head of the French "diplomatic antenna" of the French Embassy. He has met twice with the Foreign Minister since his arrival and will meet the Prime Minister August 23. He told Charge his mission, of as yet undetermined duration, is to assess the GOR response to the French, explore assistance possibilities, and look into the state of French property and personnel. He said his initial soundings reflect a GOR willingness to collaborate. He is more than a little upset, however, that the French embassy and residence were stripped bare in the week between the announced return of the French, August 12, and his arrival.

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